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INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES • ABC

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania 19481

September 23, 1980

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The Honorable Edmund Muskie, Secretary of State
The Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Re: Conviction of South Korean Opposition Leaders

I would like to call your attention to the matter of the recent conviction of South Korean opposition leader, Kim Dae Jung, and twenty-two others in that country.

After a considerable period of detention under severe conditions, the conviction and harsh sentencing of these men leaves them subject to a brutal travesty of justice. The trial, typical of the process experienced under a dictatorship, had the goal of vengeance and elimination of any viable opposition. We fear for the future of any country professing to be part of the "free world" which follows such practice.

Of the twenty-three persons sentenced at the recent trial, half of them are Christians, and at least four of them are ministers of Christian churches of South Korea. On behalf of American Baptists, a denomination committed to the worth of the individual and the right to be heard through due process of law, I urge you to speak out strongly on behalf of these men.

We ask that the United States Government employ its considerable influence in South Korea to register the strongest protest over this action. A basic step would be the cutting off of economic aid until such time as President Chun Doo Hwan can establish credibility by overturning this repressive judgment and other denials of the human rights of its people.

Respectfully yours,

Chester J. Jump, Jr.
Executive Director

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